SUPPLY OF CONVEYANCES TO SCHOOL-GOING MUSLIM GIRLS

Mr. ABDUL HAMEED KHAN :—" Mr. President, Sir, the resolution which stands in my name and which I have the honour to move is

'*That this Council recommends to the Government that, as usual, conveyances should be supplied to girls attending all the classes in the Government Hobart School, Royapetta, and other Government Muslim Girls' schools in the Province.*'

" Sir, this is a resolution which does not deal with very important policies of administration just as that we discussed before. It deals with a simple grievance of the Muslim community in this province.

4 p.m. " The House may be aware, Sir, that this particular question is attracting the attention of Muslim Members representing various parts of the province. They have come forward with interpellations, pointing out the difficulties that Muslim girls all over the province are put to. Till very recently, the Government was supplying conveyance to girls attending elementary schools as well as higher classes in secondary schools that are spread all over the province. In the Madras City itself, we have one secondary school for Muslim girls, and that is the Government Hobart Training School. I understand that the Government has issued instructions to the effect that girls attending classes higher than the fifth standard alone should be supplied with conveyance. This matter raises a very important question. Either the Government is under the impression that it is time that the concessions granted to the Muslim community should be withdrawn little by little, or they are under the impression that girls up to a certain age need not require a conveyance. On this question, I understand that the Government seems to have consulted Muslim opinion. If the advisers of Government have advised them to the effect that purdah is a pernicious institution, and if those advisers have said that Muslim girls under a certain age need not observe purdah, I must say, Sir, that the Government have been wrongly advised. If the Government have consulted the Ulemas of the Muslim community over this question, they would have got proper religious opinion on the point. I hope the hon. Minister will come forward with reasons for taking such a drastic step as he has taken. The Government have been affording facilities to the Muslim community in the matter of education. One after another, the facilities have been taken away. Under the regime of my hon. Friend and Colleague of mine, Sir A. P. Patro, as Education Minister, the concession regarding half fees was taken away, and now I understand that the present Minister seems to take away the concession that Muslim girls were having with regard to the supply of conveyance to attend school. The hon. Minister might come forward and say that elementary schools have been opened by the Corporation of Madras all over the city, and that there need not be any elementary classes in that school, namely, the Hobart school. I would tell him that is not so. Because, as there are higher classes in the Government Hobart school, they cannot dis-establish the classes imparting elementary education. They will have to keep the elementary classes in that school, since there is a training class. Again, the hon. Minister might come forward and say 'why should the girls go there and why should they not attend the schools in their own localities.' I might answer that question and tell him, if that were the case, why does the Government have elementary classes in other secondary schools under their management? The object of keeping elementary classes in secondary

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schools that are maintained by the Government in the city and elsewhere is to see that a higher standard is set up there, so that the elementary schools that are run by the Madras Corporation and other municipalities are on those lines and kept up to that standard. Therefore, Sir, the hon. Minister cannot say that there is no need for elementary classes in the Government Hobart school.

"Further, there has been a good deal of agitation in the city about this matter, and I am sure the hon. Minister has received representations from various Muslim bodies, particularly from the Association of Muslim Women in the Madras City, who have regarded this as a legitimate grievance of the Muslim community. Instead of giving facilities for Muslim education, particularly education for Muslim women, the Government are bringing obstacle after obstacle in the way of the education of the Muslim community. Therefore, I hope that the Government will consider this matter and see that no obstacles are put like this in the way of Muslim education. It was rumoured sometime ago that instead of the bullock carts that were supplied for the conveyance of the school-going girls, Government were going to substitute motor buses. We find in other private schools found all over the country the old, old bullock carts are being substituted by motor buses, which step not only gives speed but is also economically cheaper. I do not know how many hon. Members of this House are aware of the fact that a number of Muslim girls that attend the Hobart Training school situated in Royapetta have to leave their homes at 7 o'clock in the morning to attend classes at 10 o'clock, because the number of conveyance supplied is limited, and also the conveyance is rather a very slow one. So, I repeat, Sir, that instead of giving further and further facilities the Government are coming forward to remove the existing facilities one after another.

"Sir, I appeal to my hon. Colleagues in this House, who are Hindus and Christians and who are also interested in this matter, and say that this is a real grievance of our community, and I have no doubt they will also support us."

* Dr. (Mrs.) S. MUTHULAKSHMI REDDI :—"I heartily beg to second this resolution. I have been connected for the last two years with the Association of Muslim Ladies in the City of Madras. They have prepared a memorandum, and published that memorandum, in all the local newspapers, and also submitted the same to the Government. I do not propose to take up time by reading it. The Muslim ladies urge that they are seriously affected by the order of the Government stopping the supply of conveyance to Muslim girls that are attending the Hobart Training School, as that will seriously handicap the education of the girls. There are girls studying in the primary classes as well as in the higher classes, and it happens that the girls have sisters, of which the older ones attend the higher classes while the younger ones attend the primary classes. If the younger girls of the primary classes are deprived of the conveyance facilities, while the older ones go in a conveyance, they are deprived of the company of their older sisters. If a parent has got five girls, all of them attending the same school, it must be a very great grievance to the parent that the younger ones are not only made to walk but are also deprived of the protection of their older sisters. That is pointed out in this memorandum by the parents of girls.

"It is true, they say, that a few of them realize the evils of the purdah system, but as the majority of the community is wedded to the custom, although a few educated men and women of that community realize the disadvantages of purdah, the few are unable to put a stop to the custom, especially when the majority of the population is illiterate. Hence they strongly urge that the women ought not to be penalized and be deprived of the benefits of education.

"Another reason that has been given in the memorandum is that women of the Muslim community are very backward in education, compared with the women of other communities. Now, we know that women of other communities like Hindus and Christians go about freely giving lectures and doing propaganda work for the abolition of early marriage and other evil customs that are hindering the progress of women in particular and the society in general which the Muslim ladies, owing to this custom of purdah are unable to do so, because being backward in education they dare not go out and preach to the people. Hence they plead that they ought not to be punished for a custom of which they are not responsible. As higher education advances among them, and a greater percentage of women become educated, they will have the necessary moral courage to override the custom.

"Another point is this, Sir, most of the girls attending the Hobart Training School come from the poorer classes of the Muslim community. The richer classes send their girls to the Convent schools. The poor people that are residing in the neighbourhood of the Hobart Training School are sending their children to this school who are so poor that they cannot afford to provide conveyance facilities and they will be obliged to stop the education of their children, and thus the advantages of education would be denied to them. As the education of the women of a community will facilitate its social, economic and political progress, I feel, that the Government should find money to give that enlightenment and education to the Muslim women. So I appeal to the hon. Minister to accept this resolution."

* The MAHARAJA OF PITHAPURAM :—"Mr. President, I have great pleasure in supporting this resolution. The honour of our women is of the utmost importance to us when a certain section of our countrymen want their girls to observe purdah, we must respect their sentiments. It is incumbent on the Government to provide these girls with conveyances. I hope that Government will see their way to granting the request of the hon. Mover of this resolution."

Khan Sahib T. M. MOIDOO SAHIB Bahadur :—"Mr. President, Sir, I heartily support the motion that is before the House. I come from Malabar, and I have got my own experience in the matter. It is a fact known to everybody that our community is very backward in education. As far as primary education is concerned, one obstruction to the spread of education that I find is the want of conveyance to girls. The number of girls that are taking to education in our community is now slowly on the increase, and, if the Government is kind enough to accept this resolution, I am sure there will be a marked increase on the part of Muslim girls to avail themselves of this facility and to attend schools. The reason why education among girls is not
-15 making much progress in Malabar is, as a Muhammadan gentleman said to
.m. me, that the girls have to go some distance and they have to walk at some

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places to reach their school. So it is necessary that conveyances should be provided for Muslim girls, and the help which the Government render in this way would be appreciated by everybody."

Mr. K. Uppi Sahib :—" Sir, I rise to support this resolution. Recently the policy of the Government has been to give facilities for Muhammadan education and also to promote female education among Muslims. It has been a charge against the Mussalmans, that they do not take to education, or that they have an aversion for English education. But of late, Mussalmans have taken to education and recently they have taken to female education also. But the one thing that stands in the way of the latter is the purdah. Whether that system is good or bad it is not our duty here to discuss. It is there, and it is a longstanding and ancient system, a system which they consider is a very religious one, and to ask them give up that system means asking them to give up the religion itself. So, if the Government are earnest in giving education to Muslim girls, it is their duty also to help in this little way of providing conveyances to Muslim girls up to a certain age. By that I do not mean that young girls of six and seven should also be given conveyances. At least girls of ten and above may be given, that is, girls reading in the fourth standard and upwards. I cannot agree with my friend there when he objects to my saying that girls of six or seven years need not be given conveyances. What I say is Muhammadan religion enjoins purdah not on small girls and infants, (Mr. Satyamurti : Hear, hear) but only on grown-up girls of above nine years.

" In places other than the City of Madras the want of conveyance facilities is very keenly felt, and in Tellicherry and Calicut where the Muslim population is larger than in Madras, the one drawback to Muslim education is want of gosha schools and want of conveyances for taking them to such schools. There is a zenana school somewhere in Tellicherry and there is a zenana school in Calicut, but they are zenana only in name, they are only open ordinary schools. By giving the name of zenana, Government try to hoodwink the people, and when girls do not attend them, they say that Muhammadans do not take to education. It is lack of zenana schools and of facilities for attending them that stand in the way. So I should like that gosha schools are established and also gosha conveyances are provided. Government may say that they would require a large amount of money. I may say that the amount they spend in the name of so-called education will be a waste if they are not prepared to spend this paltry sum necessary. With these words, I support the resolution."

* Khan Bahadur S. K. Abdul Razack Sahib Bahadur :—" Mr. President, Sir, I rise to support this proposition, moved by my hon. Friend, Mr. Hameed Khan. It is a longstanding complaint of the Muhammadan population against the Government that they are not recognizing the needs of that community in the matter of education. The Government may advocate the removal of the purdah system even for grown-up girls. But they must understand the feelings of the Muhammadan population, and it is not for the Government to attempt to remove any customs adopted by any particular community. (Mr. Hameed Khan : Hear, hear.) I should say the percentage of education obtained by Muhammadan girls is very insignificant compared to other communities. So it is the bounden duty of the Government to come forward and adopt measures according to the necessities of each community. Government

cannot ask the Mussalmans to throw away their purdah system and allow their children to walk. When conveyances are found necessary, it is really regrettable that the Government should coolly say that due to lack of funds they are not in a position to provide conveyances. The Government should be a little more liberal in this case and not take into account the small amount that may be necessary for providing conveyances for these girls."

The hon. Dr. P. SUBBARAYAN:—"Mr. President, the question of conveyances for Muslim girls is indeed a difficult one. I find there is a difference of opinion among the hon. Muslim members themselves, because Mr. Hameed Khan thought that Government had been advised wrongly when they said that conveyances were not necessary for pupils up to the third class. On the other hand, I heard my Friend, Mr. Uppi Sahib, say that children up to nine years of age do not usually observe purdah, and so in their case there would be no necessity for conveyances. So there is a difference of opinion with regard to this matter.

"There is of course great difficulty experienced at present in the expansion of education of women among the Muslim community, because it is difficult to get an adequate supply of trained teachers, because it is difficult to get a person who is above the secondary school-leaving certificate or even the middle school. I admit that a certain amount of facilities in the way of conveyances should be given to Muhammadan girls, and it is the idea of the Government to provide conveyances from the fourth to the eighth standard in Bellary, Kurnool and also in the Hobart school, Madras. I think it will not be out of place if I give some figures with regard to this. There are 285 pupils in the Hobart school, out of which 211 are in classes of 1 to 3. As the lady Educational Officer in charge of Madras a said, majority of the pupils in these classes are not sent to school from any real desire for education but in order to keep them out of mischief. (A voice: Question.) That is what the Educational Officer after experience of the Hobart school has said. But, as I have said, the Government do want to provide conveyances for Muslim girls in all areas where there are training schools from classes 4 to 8. But in the case of higher classes—of course the Government do not want these people to give up their purdah—I know the Maharaja of Pithapuram waxed eloquent on the purdah system a moment ago—a keen social reformer as he is—in the case of girls who read above the eighth standard, they ought to have conveyances, but I think in such cases they ought to be prepared to pay a small conveyance charge to the school. Of course, in the case of scholarship-holders and poor pupils the Government will give exemption from the payment of such fees. On the other hand, as I have said, with regard to classes 4 to 8, Government do mean to provide conveyances for pupils reading in Muslim training schools in centres where such schools are established by Government."

The MAHARAJA OF PITHAPURAM:—"The hon. Minister thought fit to remark that although I am a social reformer, I still advocated purdah when supporting this motion. When there is a section that believes in it, I do not see why it should not have its own way. That is enough to explain my position and the hon. the Chief Minister has no business to pass remarks like that." (Hear, hear.)

Mr. K. UPPI SAHIB:—"The Chief Minister said that I stated in my speech that girls of certain classes do not require conveyances. But in the

second and third classes there may be girls above 9 and 10, so my limitation is with regard to age and not with regard to classes."

Mr. BASHEER AHMED SAYEED :—" Mr. President, at this fag-end of the discussion, I do not want to take a long time over this subject. I only wish to point out, Sir, that we in the Corporation of Madras have been trying the experiment of sending Muslim girls in conveyances to their schools. When free primary education was sought to be introduced in this city, the Mussalman community stood against it, and unfortunately, on the first occasion when the question was taken up and decided by the Council of the Corporation, on account of the agitation that was carried on against the introduction of free compulsory primary education, the Muslim girls were 4-30 p.m. exempted from attendance at schools for a period of two years. That proved really very fatal and the reasons that were adduced by the Muslim community were that there were not suitable conveyances, that the conveyances were not adequate and that the custom of gosha that is prevalent in the society stood in the way of their sending any girl of any age whatever to the schools. Those were the main reasons why the Muslim community did not send their girls. But when we in the Corporation of Madras assured the Muslim community in conference that we would provide the necessary conveyances to enable them to observe purdah, they boldly sent their children to schools in the city of Madras. Thus within the course of one or two years we have established 13 to 15 schools and there are now on an average about 150 girl-students studying.

" Mr. President, one great impediment in the way of the Muslim community making any advance in the matter of education is the custom of gosha which they find it very difficult to give up. I quite see that in course of time when education permeates they would observe the right kind of purdah and give up this custom of gosha which stands in the way of all progress. (Mr. S. Satyamurti : 'Hear, hear.')

" The Government have always been professing that they help the communities which are backward in the matter of education. I must submit, Mr. President, that the Government have long forgotten that the Muslim community is backward in the matter of education, the very name of the community itself having been kept out of the list of backward communities maintained by the Government. The question of conveyances was often raised in this House by means of interpellations, and the Minister, I am sorry to remark, was very insolent in his replies. In particular, when the question of conveyances to the Muslim girls in the Training School at Trichinopoly came up, he would not listen so much as to the necessity of providing conveyances.

" Sir, the absence of conveyance has been a great obstacle in the way of Muslim education. If the Government mean well towards the Muslim community in the matter of education, they ought to provide the necessary amount for providing conveyances to Muslim girls attending these schools.

" One more point, Mr. President. There are girls who go to school at the ages of 12 and 13 and they are admitted in the first or second class. These girls ought to observe purdah and cannot go to the school walking in the streets and Muslim parents are very diffident to send their children to school under such conditions. For these reasons, it is necessary that there should be some provision made for conveyances. I therefore support the motion before the House."

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* Khan Bahadur P. KHALIF-UL-LAH SAHIB Bahadur :—" Mr. President, originally I did not propose to take part in this discussion at all. I believed that the resolution before the House would be accepted when once proposed and that it did not require any argument in support of it. But having heard the hon. the Chief Minister on this point that the Government propose to sanction conveyance charges only with reference to one or two districts and one or two schools only, I feel impelled to have my say on the matter. I believe the hon. the Chief Minister is aware of the tremendous difficulties under which the training school at Trichinopoly is working. The working of the school has suffered a great deal on account of this non-provision of conveyance charges. This matter has been before the Government for several years past. Now I hear the Chief Minister is going to make provision for the same in the Trichinopoly Training School and I am glad of it. But what I submit is that invidious distinctions of this sort between one school and another or one district and another should not be made. The Government should, without any hesitation or further delay, adopt a general principle of sanctioning conveyance charges to these Muslim schools wherever existing and attended by girls above 8 years of age. They ought not to make any distinction of any sort. I therefore support the motion before the House."

Mr. G. HARISARVOTTAMA RAO :—" Sir, I move that the question be now put."

The closure motion was put and carried.

Mr. ABDUL HAMEED KHAN :—" May I say a word, Sir? "

The hon. the PRESIDENT :—" Our Standing Orders do not provide for the Mover to make a reply when closure has been accepted. When closure was applied, the hon. Member ought to have cried loudly 'No' if he desired to have an opportunity to reply." (Laughter.)

The resolution was put and carried.

CLOSURE OF LIQUOR SHOPS ON HOLIDAYS AND DAYS OF ELECTION.

Rao Sahib R. SRINIVASAN :—" I move, Sir, that

'*This Council recommends to the Government that all shops kept for sale of intoxicating alcoholic liquors and intoxicating drugs, such as opium, ganja, etc., in the province be closed on Sundays, public holidays, and days of election to local boards, municipalities and the Legislative Council and the Assembly, and that clubs, hotels and refreshment rooms that are licensed to sell intoxicating alcoholic liquors and beverages be permitted on the abovementioned days to serve such liquors to boarders, lodgers and bona fide travellers at meal hours for consumption in the licensed premises.*'

" Sir, in our attempt to close down the liquor shops we ought to proceed very very carefully, because it affects the rights and privileges of the people. We should not rush on with our measures of reform all on a sudden. The process ought to be gradual, because if we proceed rapidly, the drinkers are apt to find some substitute for the drink they are accustomed to have, or they will resort to illicit supply. My own experience is that if people do not get the drinks they are accustomed to, they find recourse to substitutes which are injurious. So that the best way to abolish drink altogether is to start with the closing of shops once in a week and on festival days and other